



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Division of Spill Prevention and Response
Prevention Preparedness and Response Program
SITUATION REPORT (SITREP)

CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS SITREP ARE DENOTED IN RED

Tug *Western Mariner* Grounding Neva Strait



SITREP #: 3

SPILL #: 22119908001

DATE/TIME OF DISTRIBUTION: March 24, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.
Information current as of March 24, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE PARTY (PRP): Western Towboat Co.

INCIDENT LOCATION: Neva Strait, approximately 18 miles northwest of Sitka (Lat/Long: 57.26982, -135.59315).

DATE/TIME OF SPILL: March 21, 2022, at 2:55 a.m.

HOW/WHEN SPILL WAS DISCOVERED AND REPORTED: On March 21, 2022, at 4:46 a.m., Western Towboat Co. reported the spill to the National Response Center. Western Towboat Co. reported that the spill occurred following the tug grounding.

TYPE/AMOUNT OF PRODUCT SPILLED: An unknown quantity of diesel was spilled. The vessel has a maximum capacity of 50,000 gallons. Western Towboat Co. estimates the amount of fuel onboard at the time of the grounding to be 45,000 gallons. The port forward fuel tank, which is a known source of the discharge, is reported to have a 13,000 gallon maximum capacity. A broken silver and rainbow sheen was observed to cover approximately four nautical miles on the day of the grounding.

CAUSE OF SPILL: The 83.7 ft. tug vessel, *Western Mariner*, was towing the freight barge, *Chichagof Provider*, headed south in Neva Strait outside of Sitka when a temporary steering failure onboard the *Western Mariner* caused the barge to collide with the tug. The collision pushed the tug onto the beach, resulting in the release of diesel.

SOURCE CONTROL: Source control has been achieved. Salvage crews confirmed on March 24, 2022 that no fuel is leaving the *Western Mainer*. Additionally, fuel has been removed from the engine room. All fuel manifolds are closed on the tug which will prevent fuel transfer between tanks. Response crew onsite have completed lightering the contents from the damaged and discharging port forward tank into an assisting fishing tender vessel. An estimated 3,000 gallons of diesel were lightered from the port forward tank, and at this time, a small amount of fuel remains.

On March 22, 2022, Global Diving and Salvage Inc. (Global) arrived in Sitka and completed an initial assessment of the damage to the vessel. Two sources of fuel ingress into the vessel's engine room were identified. On March 23, 2022 Global completed sealing these two sources as well as two known sources of oily water from the

engine room to the environment. Additionally, Hanson Maritime lightered 4,400 gallons of oil and water from the engine room. Two 600-gallon totes of oily water were recovered through skimming operations.

RESPONSE ACTION: ADEC has formed a Unified Command with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the responsible party, Western Towboat Co.

Two layers of containment boom have been deployed around the vessel. On March 21, 2022, an oil recovery skimmer was operated within the primary layer of boom, closest to the vessel. Skimming activities recovered an estimated 850 gallons of oily water. Absorbent materials were placed between the layers of boom to passively recover diesel from the water surface. The freight barge, *Chichagof Provider*, was safely towed back to Sitka.

On the evening of March 21, 2022, the Southeast Alaska Petroleum Response Organization (SEAPRO) arrived in Sitka with the Oil Spill Response Vessel, *Neka Bay*. The *Neka Bay* is equipped with a response crew, 500 ft of containment boom, an onboard skimmer, and storage capacity for up to 55 barrels of recovered fuel. SEAPRO will be observing local areas for shoreline or wildlife impacts and is ready to deploy protective measures if needed. An additional 9,000 ft. of boom and three additional vessels of opportunity are on standby in Sitka.

On March 23, 2022, Global and Hanson Maritime crew were onsite and adjusted containment boom that had been displaced overnight during heavy weather. The tug's known external leaks were repaired and secured. Two 600-gallon totes of oil-water mixture were recovered from the primary containment area using a skimmer. An estimated 4,400 gallons of oil-water mixture was recovered from the engine room of the tug.

On the morning of March 24, 2022, an overflight conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) observed sheen in Neva Strait, Olga Strait, and into Krestof Sound to the north end of the Magoun Islands. SEAPRO deployed additional boom in a J-configuration approximately 500-feet to the North and South of the *Western Mariner* to collect sheen escaping the two layers of containment boom directly around the vessel. The skimmer continues to operate within the inner containment boom to recover diesel that had already leaked from the *Western Mariner* before source control was achieved.

On March 24, 2022, Global and Hanson Maritime crew finished pumping the oil-water mixture from the tug's engine room.

RESOURCES AT RISK OR AFFECTED: Pacific herring are currently aggregating and staging for spawning in the greater Sitka Sound area. Marine mammal and avian predators are likely aggregating in the area to prey on herring. No impacts to marine mammals or wildlife have been reported, but no dedicated wildlife surveys have been conducted at this time. Stretches of environmentally sensitive shoreline occur in the area, such as tidal flats and brackish marsh. St. John Baptist Bay is a known salmon habitat and nursery area for juvenile sablefish. Neva Strait is a known sea cucumber habitat and commercial harvesting ground. Nearby beaches have been used historically as clam harvesting areas.

On March 21st, 2022, a four nautical mile sheen was observed between the grounded vessel north to the Kane Islands in southeast Salisbury Sound, but no observations of extensively oiled shorelines were reported.

On March 21st and 23rd, 2022, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) conducted overflight surveys and did not observe any herring spawning or schooling near the sheen. On March 24th, 2022, around 8:30 a.m., the Alaska Department of Fish and Game conducted overflight surveys and observed 20,000 tons of herring in Hayward Strait (Figure 1) that are moving into Krestof Sound. The survey observed broken sheening that

extended into Olga Strait as well as Krestof Sound, extending south to the north end of the Magoun Islands. Subsequent overflights showed that the sheening outside of Neva Strait had dissipated throughout the day.

The Magoun Islands hold significant cultural importance to local subsistence users and is an area where commercial fisheries take place. ADFG has transitioned the commercial herring fishery away from Hayward Strait to avoid potential impacts from oil.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Hanson Maritime and Global are prioritizing removing fuel from the damaged tank that was a source of diesel found in the engine room and will then begin removing fuel from other tanks onboard the vessel. SEAPRO will have crew onsite to tend containment and J-configuration boom at first morning light on March 25, 2022. Environmental shoreline assessments and wildlife observations will be carried out over the weekend.

WEATHER:

Thursday:

Partly sunny then becoming cloudy. Isolated rain showers in the morning, then scattered rain showers in the afternoon. High of 45°F. SE winds 8-17 mph. Gusts up to 25 mph increasing to 35 mph late in the afternoon. Wave height 2 ft. building to 4 ft. in the afternoon. E swell 0 ft.

Thursday Night:

Cloudy. Scattered rain showers early in the evening. Chance of rain in the late evening and early morning. Low of 38°F. SE winds 17-20 mph with gusts to around 39 mph. Wave height 4 ft. E swell 0 ft.

Friday:

Cloudy. Rain likely until late afternoon, then chance of rain late in the afternoon. High of 43°F. SE winds 8-17 mph with gusts to around 36 mph in the morning becoming light, then becoming SE around 7 mph late in the afternoon. Wave height 4 ft. subsiding to 2 ft. in the late morning and afternoon. E swell 0 ft.

Friday Night:

Mostly cloudy. Scattered rain showers through the night. Scattered snow showers after midnight. Low of 32°F. E winds 7-8 mph early in the evening becoming light, then becoming NE 5-6 mph after midnight. Wave height 1 ft. SE swell 0 ft.

Tides:

Date	Day	Time	Pred	High/Low
3/24/2022	Thursday	3:00	1.32	H
3/24/2022	Thursday	8:23	-1.62	L
3/24/2022	Thursday	15:48	1.37	H
3/24/2022	Thursday	20:53	-0.90	L
3/25/2022	Friday	4:06	1.08	H
3/25/2022	Friday	9:17	-1.26	L
3/25/2022	Friday	17:12	1.26	H
3/25/2022	Friday	23:41	-0.58	L
3/26/2022	Saturday	5:36	0.99	H
3/26/2022	Saturday	12:11	-1.04	L
3/26/2022	Saturday	18:36	1.32	H
3/27/2022	Sunday	1:17	-0.69	L

NOAA Station PCT4211, Wyvill Reef, Neva Strait, AK

UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL:

Incident Commander: Rich Christiansen, Western Towboat Co.

SOSC: Rachael Krajewski, ADEC

FOSC: CAPT Darwin Jensen, USCG

DATE/TIME OF THE NEXT REPORT DISTRIBUTION: As the situation warrants.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response/>

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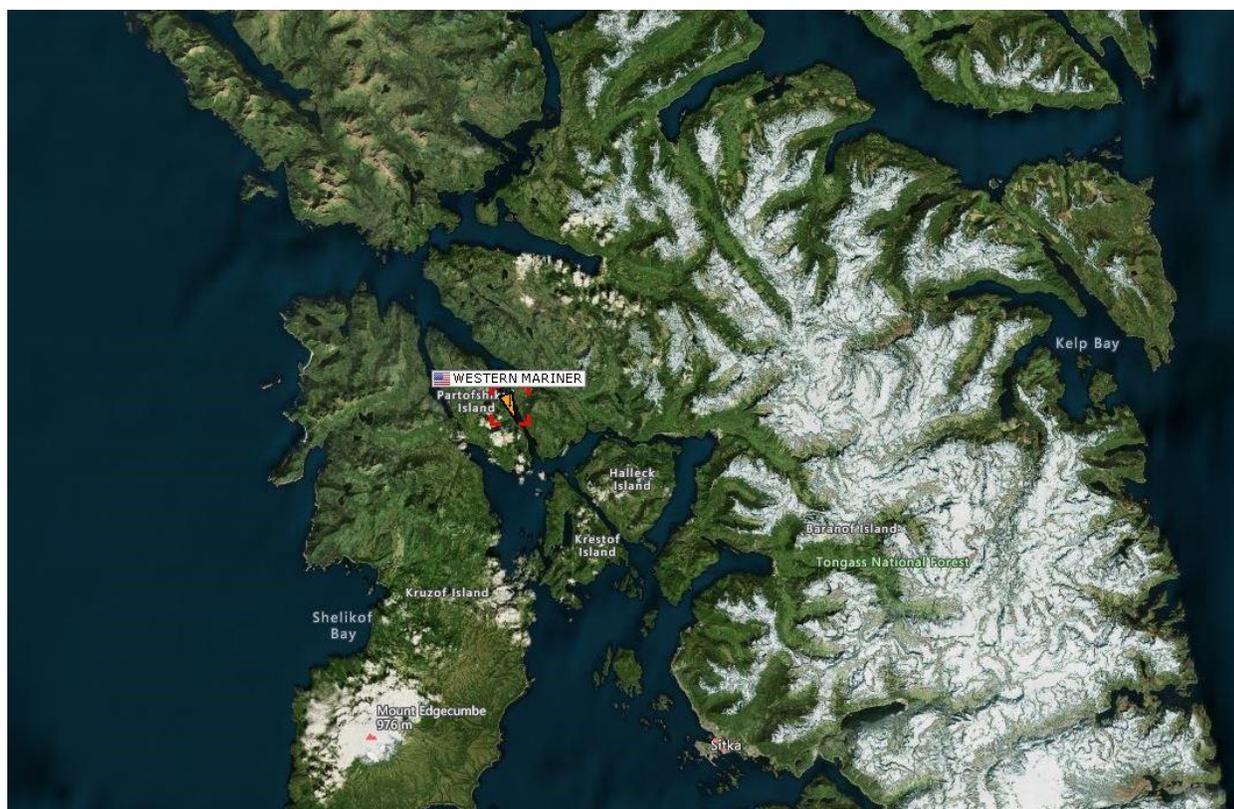


Figure 1. Incident Location.



Figure 2. Observed sheening ribbons on the north end of Krestof Sound extending south toward Magoun Islands as seen around 8:30 a.m. on March 24th. Photo by Alaska Department of Fish & Game.



Figure 3. Water-side view of skimmer recovering product within primary containment boom as seen on March 23rd. Photo by Global Diving and Salvage, Inc.



Figure 4. Global Diving and Salvage, Inc. and Western Towboat Co. crew securing through-hull fittings as seen on March 23rd. Photo by Global Diving and Salvage, Inc.

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST: This situation report was distributed to the agencies listed on the standard distribution list, which includes the governor’s office, State Emergency Operations Center, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other state agencies. This situation report was also distributed to the following agencies and stakeholders:

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